



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

official, and through the popular interest it excited, and the furtherance it met with at the hands of every class, it became an embassy of goodwill between North and South America; and its chief result is not so much the extending of knowledge as the increase of kind feeling and mutual intelligence between two nations, distant not more in space than in race and institutions, but united in the interests of civilization and in common hopes of progress.

The narrative portions of the work before us give an animated picture, not only of the incidents of travel, and of the scenery of Brazil, but of the habits and character of the various races and classes of its people. It is the best account in English of the aspects of life in this portion of South America. The more purely scientific parts are of unusual interest, as clear records of extraordinary and unexpected discoveries, and of the great results in the extension of a knowledge of the geology and the natural productions of the country, achieved by the thoroughly trained powers of a rare scientific genius.

We commend the book heartily alike to the general and the scientific reader.

-
13. — *The Science of Knowledge.* By J. G. FICHTE. Translated from the German by A. E. KROEGER. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1868. 12mo. pp. 377.

IN the curiosity shop of those "vain opinions" upon which, under the name of metaphysics, so much of the thinking power of mankind, previously to the advent of Auguste Comte, continued to be wasted, the particular absurdity generally ticketed with the name of Fichte is the notion, that the Ego, the individual self-consciousness, is the only reality, and creates its own world, as the moth spins its cocoon out of its own bowels. In fact, however, this is much more nearly the contrary of Fichte's opinion, and he is far more open to the opposite reproach of having allowed too much weight to the common prejudice, that reality means something absolutely objective, external to the mind, and known only in the shape of feeling, that is, in the impression it makes upon us. This was Fichte's belief, declared in words impossible to mistake; * indeed, it is this inclination of mind in him, and his consequent slight esteem of metaphysics, except as merely regulative, not constitutive, that seems to have prompted the present translation. "Not to encourage metaphysics," says Mr. Kroeger, in his Preface, "but henceforth and forever to silence them, and to lead mankind back to true life, has this work been written and translated."

* See, e. g., *Sämmtliche Werke*, V. 356, 358. Mr. Kroeger's trans., p. 358, *seq.*

So far there is nothing peculiar in Fichte's position. But Fichte saw, what those who so far share his premises do not seem always to see, that, if reality is something essentially objective, outside of the mind and foreign to it, and if at the same time it is true that all we know of objects is the sensations they give us, and the order in which these sensations occur,—in other words, if our knowledge is essentially subjective,—the two can never meet; knowledge will be confined to simple apprehension of our own momentary feelings, and any valid generalization, in other words, thought, will be impossible. Such a position as this, however, confutes itself: whatever else we may doubt, we cannot doubt that we doubt, we cannot state the doubt without assuming the validity of generalization and of thought. The idealism of Kant and of Fichte, accordingly, is only the legitimate consequence of Hume's scepticism. The more we doubt all necessary connection between our ideas and external reality, the more strongly are we thrown back, if we really understand the force of our own words, upon ideas. These, at least, are true *for us*; we cannot open our mouths to speak, without assuming their truth so far; and if this is all, of course they become the only truth. The external realities, things in their ultimate or objective nature, may be what they please, they are nothing *to us* except so far as they are *not* external, and it is to this part of them that human science, whether we like it or not, is confined. If anybody supposes that our ideas are purely subjective, and yet talks about science, it is he, and not Fichte, who ought to be called absolute idealist. Fichte's position, on the contrary, is, that in one instance at any rate, namely, in self-consciousness, or the perception of the Ego by itself, we have the same immediate knowledge of the object that we have of the thought, since our topic is at once subject and object. Whatever legitimately follows, then, from this primary fact is secure and scientific truth; any doubt of it contradicts itself in the same breath. The whole object of the *Wissenschaftslehre* was to point out everywhere this element in our knowledge.

The popular criticism of Fichte's doctrine does not, indeed, deny the absolute certainty of self-consciousness, but denies only the restriction of certainty to *self*-consciousness, and considers that this would deprive our knowledge of all claims to objectivity or validity for other people. Science, in this view, becomes, therefore, a simple interrogation of consciousness. But the difficulty then is to establish any test of truth. If Fichte's rule is too narrow and exclusive, that of his opponents is too wide and general. It will not do to admit that what anybody feels is true, yet short of this it seems impossible to draw any line that will stand a moment's examination. Any criterion

that we can contrive will amount at last to some new combination of the old elements, and no marshalling or aggregation of the units will ever bring out anything qualitatively different from the separate units, but only quantitatively different. We can very easily get a decision that will have the force of numbers, but we cannot in this way get a decision that will have the force of truth. We come back, then, to the point from which we started, namely, the individual consciousness. If this, as self-consciousness, is indefeasibly certain, then just so far and no farther is certainty attainable; if it is only subjective, a point without extension, or a mere abstraction, so much the worse, but at any rate it contains the sum of science.

To the fashionable psychology of the day the Ego is merely a collective name for the various functions of the nervous system, or an abstract expression for the residua of former thoughts, feelings, and volitions in the individual. But this is either attributing great force to abstractions, or else it is difficult to say what to this view individuality or personal identity can mean. The individual, at any rate, is just as real as his perception, neither more nor less, and this is what Fichte pointed out. If his perception is only a psychological phenomenon, and needs to have something of an opposite nature added to it before it can be perceptive of truth, this will hold also of his individuality: that, too, must be abolished, changed into its opposite, before it can be allowed to exist. There is this antagonism between the individual and the universal: if it is fundamental, then they are mutually exclusive.

Our knowledge, we are told, is necessarily limited, conditioned, and must be so in order to be knowledge at all. So as to the individual. Burke tells us that individual rights must be limited in order to be enjoyed. Do these limits in either case curtail the reality? Do we know less, or are we less free, by reason of its conditions? If, as is often hastily assumed, they do curtail it, then absolute truth and absolute right, or, in other words, truth and right, — for these epithets add nothing, — are chimeras. Fichte had grasped somewhat more firmly than Kant the perception that these limitations, instead of diminishing what they affect, enlarge and confirm it, and that truth becomes truth, and right right, by overcoming and taking up into themselves their seeming opposites. This cardinal idea of all speculation Fichte endeavored over and over again to state, at great length and in the abstrusest and most repellent formulas, but never succeeded to his own satisfaction, because he never fully realized the whole range of his own doctrine. The point was to show that the I, in the attainment of truth, speculative or practical, of knowledge or of freedom, is not simply limited, but *self*-limited, — and the negation which it meets and seems to suffer

from, in truth self-inflicted and in furtherance of its own purpose, so that its progress is always through a constant setting aside of its own immediate certainty. The world, to the infant or to the infantile man, is simply an indefinite something *else*, other-than-he: the highest of his ideas — for example, his idea of God — cannot be otherwise defined. But as he comes to himself, he recognizes this Other as ultimately spirit, that is, ultimately his own. As soon as he begins to define and to determine, or, in other words, to separate what is real from what is only apparent, the whole process consists in seizing in the immediate fact the law, that is, the thought, or the relation to spirit. What is left out, or incapable of being assimilated, is not reality, but unreality; and the true reality shows itself at last as other-than-he only so far as he is other-than-spirit, other than his true self. All this Fichte *said*, at least by implication; but he did not realize his own perception, but was continually falling back into the notion, from which this perception is the true escape, that limitation, even as self-limitation, is an outward necessity, an inexplicable fact, of which we can only say that it happens so. Thus reality is to him still a *datum*, given by something else than thought, and definable only as something *else*. Consequently there is always something in the thought, and necessary to it, which yet is of an opposite nature to thought, and as far as possible to be eliminated. So in the moral world, freedom and individuality are conditioned by something which the whole activity of the free individual is directed to suppress and remove. Thought and freedom thus remain abstract, formal, dependent on material supplied from without, and which they are at the same time wholly occupied in endeavoring to get rid of.

Idea and reality are in Fichte's philosophy necessarily *related*; but this necessity is conceived as constraint, as irresistible accident, not as necessity of their own nature. The only consummation, accordingly, either theoretical or practical, in science or in morals, is through *faith*; truth exists only as an ideal, that is, an unrealized (and never to be realized) idea. Life, whether as pursuit of knowledge or of virtue, is a pious aspiration, which, however, it would be cruel to gratify. But this is an impossible position in Philosophy. Faith is admirable, and philosophers are no more debarred from it than other people; but a scientific faith is a contradiction in terms. Faith is anticipation of truth, and is justified precisely so long as it seeks and demands to be set aside by the truth. Stated as if they were truth, these pious aspirations become a pious regard for human weakness and ignorance, and involve a worse self-glorification than that they supplant. The truth is, the solution resolves itself into an attempt to say two things

and contradictory things at once, to unite knowledge and ignorance, reality and unreality, in one conception. But in order to do this successfully it is necessary to carry out the conception still farther, so as to see them no longer as contradictories, but as different factors in the same truth.

Mr. Kroeger's declared purpose in undertaking a task so arduous and so conscientiously performed, namely, to put an end to metaphysics, is one in the very nature of it incapable of accomplishment. The better Fichte's metaphysics, the more impossible to arrest speculation at the point where he left it. We are very far from thinking the translator's labor ill-bestowed, but this is because we think Fichte's principles lead to something better than his (theoretical) conclusions. There is an inner sense that occasionally shines through the somewhat turbid medium of a statement inadequate to the greatness of the thought which it covers: as, for example, where he speaks of a mode of thought wherein freedom and necessity are united, or, in his conception of the moral law as the highest representative of intuition, of the absolute *datum*, — the *datum* on the other hand being the I itself. In these somewhat turbid waters many have fished, among others Schopenhauer, and they are far from being fished out.

As above remarked, Fichte made various attempts at a statement of his principles, none of them finally satisfactory to himself. Seven or eight distinct "foundations," "outlines," "introductions," &c., are printed in his collected works. Mr. Kroeger has not selected the latest, and, as the philosopher's son and editor considers, the most mature of these attempts, perhaps because, although written in 1801, or thirteen years before Fichte's death, he never published it, — or perhaps because it is less systematic in form, and less clearly defined and characteristic in its views. The one selected is that usually known as the *Wissenschaftslehre*, and repeatedly printed during Fichte's life. We notice that Mr. Kroeger has here and there condensed the original, but, as far as we have observed, without injury to the sense. We have not compared his translation throughout, but, so far as we have looked, it seems accurate, and in general as satisfactory as so literal a version can be. A few expressions, such as "deed-act," "the in-itself certainty," "to ground each other," "thinkability," &c., would be better paraphrased, — but on the whole there is far less of this sort to find fault with in Mr. Kroeger than in Mr. Stirling's "Secret of Hegel," or even in some of the writings of Mr. Kroeger's fellow-laborers in the "Journal of Speculative Philosophy," published in St. Louis; an undertaking which, like the one before us, does honor to their city. Besides the *Wissenschaftslehre*, the volume contains a speech on the Dignity of Man, delivered

at the close of the philosophical lectures, in which may be found in more attractive form something of Fichte's more advanced doctrine, and a fragment on the religious bearings of his philosophy, published after his death, which seems to us less happily chosen.

LIST OF SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

1. Military History of Ulysses S. Grant, from April, 1861, to April, 1865. By Adam Badeau. Vol. I. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1868. 8vo. pp. xiii., 683.
2. Annals of the United States Christian Commission. By Lemuel Moss, Home Secretary to the Commission. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1868. 8vo. pp. 752.
3. Brown University in the Civil War. A Memorial. Providence. 1868. Sm. 4to. pp. xii., 380.
4. Ohio in the War: her Statesmen, her Generals, and Soldiers. By Whitelaw Reid. In Two Volumes. Cincinnati: Moore, Wiltach, and Baldwin. 1868. 8vo. Vol. I. pp. 1050. Vol. II. pp. 949.
5. Beyond the Mississippi: from the Great River to the Great Ocean. Life and Adventure on the Prairies, Mountains, and Pacific Coast. With more than Two Hundred Illustrations from Photographs and Original Sketches. 1857-1867. By Albert D. Richardson. Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Company. 1867. 8vo. pp. 572.
6. Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism, Biography of its Founders, and History of its Church. Personal Remembrances and Historical Collections hitherto unwritten. By Pomeroy Tucker. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1867. 12mo. pp. 302.
7. History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. By Abel Stevens, LL. D. New York: Carleton and Porter. 1867. 12mo. Vol. III. pp. 510. Vol. IV. pp. 522.
8. Christendom's Divisions. Part II., Greeks and Latins. Being a Full and Connected History of their Dissensions and Overtures for Peace down to the Reformation. By Edward S. Ffoulkes, formerly Fellow and Tutor of Jesus College, Oxford. London: Longmans, Green, & Co. 1867. Post 8vo. pp. xii., 601.
9. Origin and History of the Books of the Bible, both the Canonical and the Apocryphal, designed to show what the Bible is not, what it is, and how to use it. By Prof. C. E. Stowe, D. D. The New Testament. Illustrated. Hartford Publishing Company. 1867. 8vo. pp. 583.
10. Bacon's Essays. With Annotations by Richard Whately, D. D., and Notes and a Glossarial Index by Franklin Fiske Heard. Boston: Lee and Shepard. 1868. 8vo. pp. xlix., 641.
11. The Friendships of Women. By William Rounseville Alger. Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1868. 16mo. pp. xvi., 416.